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[Despatch Abstract.]

Legislative Assembly Question (Starred) 397 -
Steps taken to efadicate leprosy - Papers Recorded

Steps taken to eradicate leprosy

*397 Q. Sri G.KUMARASWAMI: Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state --

(a) What steps the Government have taken so far to eradicate leprosy in this Province;

(b) The centres where leprosy clinics have been opened after the 1st May 1946; and

(c) how the Government are helping the British Empire Leprosy Eradication Association in preventing and also combating this disease?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY: "(a) & (c) Leprosy relief work in this Province is mainly carried on by the following institutions:-

(i) the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association;

(ii) the Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium at Tirumani, Chingleput;

(iii) other private leprosy asylums; and

(iv) Leprosy clinics attached to the Government General Hospital, Madras, The Stanley Hospital, Madras and Erskine Hospital, Madura, and the clinics attached to the District Headquarters and almost all Government Hospitals and Local Fund Medical Institutions.

Item (i) above. Since 1939 the leprosy work in this Province is being carried on by the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association and behalf of the Government with an annual grant of Rs.21,000 (now reduced to Rs.15,700) and with the funds allotted to it by the Indian Council of the Association and other philanthropic bodies. The Association had also been running the Rural Leprosy Prevention Unit at Polambakkam with an annual grant of Rs.7,269 from the Government.

2) As a part of the Post War Scheme relating to "Anti-Leprosy Campaign" and incidentally to relieve the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association of some of its activities the Government have taken over under their control the Silver Jubilee Children's Clinic at Saidapet, the Ettapur Children's Sanatorium and the Polambakkam Rural Leprosy Prevention Unit.

Item (ii) above. The Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium which is the centre for leprosy activities in this Province is a Government institution which was till recently managed by the Church of Scotland Mission under an agreement. The institution has been taken over under Government control with effect from 1st April 1948.

Item (iii) above. There are 12 private leprosy asylums in this Province. The Government are paying annual capitation grants to them. Leprosy work chiefly consists in propaganda survey Segregation and treatment.

(2) The following proposals for an Anti-leprosy Campaign are now under consideration of Government.

a) the establishment of a Provincial Unit with headquarters at Vellore and a District Survey Unit in the first instance in the South Arcot District

for a detailed survey and organisation of leprosy prevention work on a provincial and district basis;

(b) the establishment of two leprosy clinics in the Kadambuliyur Firka in the South Arcot district; and

(c) the establishment of a publicity and welfare Organisation to be run by the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association with an annual grant from the Government.

3) The Government have also sanctioned the payment of half-grants to the Kasthurba Gandhi National Memorial Trust for the construction of a Leprosy Home for Women and Children in the South Arcot District and to the St. Joseph's Leprosy Hospital and Asylum at Kankanady for the construction of additional buildings.

b) No new clinics have been opened after 1st May 1946.

c) (Please see under clause (a) above)

Begum Sultan MIR AMIRUDDIN:- " As one of the most urgent requirements in tackling the problem of leprosy is the isolation of children from infective parents, may I know what steps are being taken in this regard in this Province?"

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " It is a very big question, Sir. According to the information available with the Government, there are said to be about 100,000 infective cases in our Province. In the existing institutions meant for leprosy patients, we are able to accommodate only 2,000 cases. Unless we are able to provide either sufficient facilities for institutional segaregation or arrangements for home isolation it is not possible to segregate so many of these patients."

M.S. ABDUL MAJID SAHIB Bahadur:-" Is it not a fact Sir, that among the beggars in the City of Madras; and in the Province there is a considerable number of lepers, and if so may I know what arrangements the Government are making to house these people in leprosy asylums?

The Hon. Sri A.B. Shetty:- "I have already said that it is not possible to isolate these patients. We have not got enough of provision for the segregation of all infective cases."

Begum Sultan MIR AMIRUDDIN:- " Is it not a fact that there are two types of leprosy the infective, and the non effective? Is it not desirable that instead of spending funds merely in the treatment of leprosy the Government should also tackle the root cause of the problem by isolating the children of infective parents?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:- The majority of cases are non-infective, and they are what are called neural cases. About 25 per cent of the total number of cases are of the infective type. And as I said earlier, there are said to be about 100,000 cases of the infective type. It is not a practicable proposition to provide institutional segregation for all these cases. The only thing that we can do is to do propaganda and see that people keep children away from infective cases in their own homes.

Dr. M.J. SAMUEL:-" Is it a fact, Sir, that the grants-in-aid given to certain leprosy asylums in the Province have been stopped and as a result the work of these asylums has been curtailed down, and the patients were forced to leave the asylums and wonder about in the streets?"

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:-" Capitation grants are given to patients in the Mission Leprosy homes."

SRI V.LAKSHMI AMMAL:-" Is it not a fact, Sir, that medical opinion is that the leprosy patients must be segregated? As anumber of leprosy patients are seen sleeping on road sides in the night, will the Government consider the desirability of segregating these lepers in the night instead of allowing them to sleep in the ~~night~~ night on the roadside?"

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " The experiment of night segregation is being tried, at Polambakkam, and has given fairly good results. But we shall have to watch the experiment for some more time."

Sri T.VISWANATHAM:- "May I ask, Sir, whether if the municipality manage any asylums they would be given capital grants by the Government?

The Hon. SRI A.B.SHETTY:- " We shall consider if applications come."

Sri ALLURI SATYANARAYANA RAJU:- " Are the Government aware of the fact that only 'naturopathy' offer an effective cure for leprosy, as it has been found in experience by the Public, and will they consider the desirability of giving some financial help for encouraging that system?

The Hon. Sri A.B.SHETTY:- "Sir, nature cures many cases. A large number of neural cases are cured spantaneously even without treatment. It is not due to any treatment by Naturopath but due to the action of nature itself.

Sri S.NAGAPPA:- "May I know Sir, whether these lepers are allowed any financial aid, when they come and settle in these asylums?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:-" Poor patients are given free treatment and free boarding and lodging."

Sri V. RAGHAVAYYA:- " Do the Government propose to have legislation for compelling the lepers to segregate themselves? If so, may I know whether the Government will take any special care about Chingleput and Nellore, where the disease is on the increase?"

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:- "There is already provision to that effect in the Leper Act, and in the Madras Public Health Act. But there is a proposal to amend the Public Health Act, because it is unnecessary to segregate non infective cases."

Sri V.M.RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:- "May I know, Sir, whether it is not practicable for Government to deal with these 100,000 cases of the infective type and make them non-infective ones?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:- "So far, we have not been able to find any specific for effective treatment of leprosy There is now what is called the 'Sulphone' group of drugs, which is being given a trial."

Sri V.I.Muniswamy Pillai " ~~(I-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ " As leprosy is very acute in Kadambuliyur in South Arcot District, may I know whether the Government propose to take any special steps to eradicate it?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:-" I have already stated that there are two leprosy clinics in this firka."

Sri B.S.Murthi:- "May I know, Sir, whether the Government are aware of the fact that Ayurveda provides an effective cure for leprosy, and if so, may I know whether there are any Ayurvedic clinics supported by Government grants?

The Hon.Sri A.B.Shetty:- The most common form of treatment is some injection of Chalmugra oil which is an old Ayurvedic medicine."

M.S. ABDUL MAJID SAHIB Bahadur:-" May I know, Sir, what are the responsibilities of the Local bodies in this matter?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:-" The Government have assumed the responsibility for leprosy prevention and control."

Sri V.I. MUNISWAMY PILLAY:- " May I know, Sir, when the Hon. Rajakumari Amrit Kaur was here whether the Hon. Minister acquainted her with the conditions of leprosy obtaining in this Province and whether he has approached her for financial and other help?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:-"The Government of India is well aware of the extent of leprosy and the problems was one of the subjects of discussion at the Health Ministers Conference held recently."

SRI. B.S. MURTHI:- " May I ask the Government whether any Government help is being given to the Ayurvedic Clinic for curing leprosy?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " I am not aware that any Ayurvedic clinics have been established for treating leprosy patients."

M.S.ABDUL MAJID SAHIB Bahadur:-" Is it not a fact that some of the inmates of the Chingleput leprosy asylum wander about in the streets of Chingleput, and thus expose the people of that place to the danger of infection?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " I do not think they are allowed to go about like that, and mix with other people"

N.MAUHAMMAD ANWAR SA[illegible] Bahadur:- "As the lepers of Madras City are found wandering from one bus stop to another, and causing a good deal of nuisance to everybody will the Hon.Minister take steps to see that their wandering is made a cognizable offence which should be subjected to police action?

The Hon.Sri A .B.SHETTY:-" I have already said that the majority of leprosy patients are not infective. It is only about 25 percent of them that are infective. Unless we provide places for accommodating them it is not possible to isolate them or prevent them from going about in the streets "

BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN:-" Have any steps been taken to estimate the extent or the incidence of leprosy among industrial workers? If not, will the Government take steps to investigate into this matter, because leprosy spreads through industrial workers also be to a large extent?"

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- "Yes, Sir, I have already said that the Government have decided to have a Provincial Unit for survey work at Vellore and a District Survey Unit in South Arcot And we shall increase the number of District Units in course of time."

Sri G.KUMARASWAMI:- May I ask the Hon. Minister in what districts of the Province leprosy is most prevalent?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- "Madras Province is one of the highly endemic areas for leprosy. But I cannot give at present the names of the districts where the incidence of leprosy is particularly high."

M.MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur:- " Arising out of the answer of the Hon. Minister that he is unaware of the existence of any efective medicine for leprosy in the Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia, may I request the Government to make enquiries of experts in Ayurvedic medicine to see whether there is any such effective medicine because, Sir, I know there are such medicines?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:- If the Hon. Member is in possession of any such information he may kindly pass it on to the Government.

Srimathi V.LAKSHMI AMMAL:-" May I know whether the Hon. Minister is aware that a new medicine has been invented by a lady doctor which cures leprosy wonderfully?

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY:-"There are what are called the "Sulphone" group of drugs. They are giving fairly good results but still they are on traal."

Sri S.NAGAPPA:-" If the Government have taken the question of curing leprosy in right earnest, will they be pleased to ask the District Medical Officers to post extra ddctors, especially in villages where there are a large number of lepers?.

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY " There are leprosy clinics attached to all Government and Local Board Hospital, and out patients are bein given treatment, there "

Sri T.Viswanathan:-" Regarding Ayurvedic clinics, may I draw the attention of the Hon. Minister that there is one large clinic at Waltair and whether the Government will be parepared to give adequate amount as grant in aid to that clinic?"

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY " I shall have the matter considered if the Hon. Member kindly writes to me about it."

Sri V. I. MUNISWAMY PILLAY:- Are the Government aware that the presence of a large number of neem trees gives relief to the lepers?.

The Hon.Sri A.B.SHETTY This information is new to me"

Dr. M.J. SAMUEL:- "Are the Government aware that the incidence of leprosy in the Kurnool District has increased greatly during the last decade and what special steps the Government have taken in order to check this?

The Hon. Sri A.B. Shetty :- " The incidence of leprosy has increased every where and people should take care to see that children are segregated from adult infective cases."

M.S.ABDUL MAJID SAHIB Bahadur. " May I ask the Hon. Minister what steps the Government have taken in order to isolate cases of leprosy among the prisoners in this Province?

The Hon.Sri A.B. SHETTY:-" The infective cases have to be kept isolated."

Mr. SPEAKER. " The question is this. If some prisoners are suffering from leprosy and if they are kept in jail what steps Government are taking with regard to them and whether they are being segregated?"

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " I presume convicts who are affected with leprosy are kept segregated."

M. MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur:-" In view of the fact that Government are registering indigenous dispensaries of Siddа, Unani and Ayurvedic medicines, I want to know whether the Government have not come in contact with such an effective medicine either in Sidda Or Unani or Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia as will cure this leprosy?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:-" I would invite those experts in indigenous systems of medicine who profess to cure leprosy cases effectively to come and handle some cases in Tirumani Leprosy Settlement."

MAHAMED ABDUL SALAM SAHIB Bahadur:-" Is it not a fact, Sir, the local boards are unable to tackle this problem, since the Government do not help them with medicines and other things?"

The Hon. Sri A.AB. SHETTY " In hospitals under Local bodies also, Sir, there are leprosy clinics and as I have said before, out patients are being treated there."

~~x~~Sri P.L KANDASWAMI PILLAI " In view of the fact that leprosy is increasing every year in Attur taluk in Salem district, will the Government start a special clinic in that taluk?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY " I have already said that the incidence of leprosy has increased in very many places and it is not possible to start a clinic in each and every place where there is leprosy."

M.MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur:- Will the Government kindly issue a public invitation to some experts to come to the Tirumani hospital in order to cure leprosy?"

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY " I do not think any such invitation is necessary. Leprosy is an age long disease. I do not know what the experts about whom the Leader of the opposition is talking so much, were doing all these years."

M.MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur:- In view of the fact that the Government are giving a step motherly treatment to indigenous medicine, will they think it proper and useful to issue such a public invitation so that people who are interested in indigenous medicines may come forward when they come to know that the Government are prepared to encourage them in a proper way side by side with the allopathic system of medicine?.

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY -"Leprosy patients are here, there and everywhere. It is open to those people to cure these patients and establish their claim about the efficacy of their remedy. Therefore I do not know why a public invitation is necessary."

M.MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur:- " Sir, I do not know the reason why the Government feel shy about issuing invitations to those people to come to the Tirumani Hospital?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY:- " The Government are not feeling shy. On the other hand, the claim which the Hon. Leader of the opposition has made on behalf of these indigenous medicines is a preposterous claim."

Sri S.NAGAPPA:- In view of the fact that most of the villagers cannot come to the leprosy clinics which are usually situated in District Headquarters, will the Government consider the desirability of opening clinics if there are twenty or twenty five lepers in one village or in a group of villages?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY :- " As far as their funds permit, the Government are doing whatever is possible in the matter."

M.MUHAMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur. " Sir, in view of the wording used by the Hon. Minister that I am making a preposterous claim about the indigenous medicines may I point out that the statement of Hon. Minister himself does prove my contention that the Government are not giving proper treatment to the indigenous medicine and this country and the world knows that we have got more effective medicines for leprosy in indigenous pharmacopeia than than in other pharmacopoeia?.

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY - " If we had such effective medicines, I do not understand why there should be so much of leprosy in India and why India is one of the endemic centres of leprosy in the world to-day." (Laughter)

M. MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB Bahadur- "If there had not been these medicines there would have been many more cases. (Laughter) In spite of our poverty stricken conditions and in spite of our low standard of living, still if there is not a very high rate of incidence of leprosy, it is due to the cheap indigenous medicines which help to keep that figure so low as it is to day."

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY The Hon. the Leader of the opposition may kindly give us what information he has got in his possession. I shall then consider it."

SRI P. KANDASWAMI PILLAI " In view of the fact that the homoeopathic system has got a very effective medicine for this, will the Government care to get into touch with the homeopathic doctors in order to establish a clinic under that system for curing leprosy?

The Hon. Sri A.B. SHETTY This is another claim which I do not concede unless there is sufficient proof of it.

Mr. SPEAKER Questions are over."

MOHAMED ABDUL SALAM SAHIB Bahadur On a point of information."

MR. SPEAKER If the Hon. Member has got anything let him give it to me in writing Now in the middle, I am unable to allow him to raise the point.

The Legislative Assembly question was answered on 28th September 1948. A copy of the printed proceedings is at 51-56. c.f. The supplementary questions asked in that connection do not call for any special remarks. The papers may be recorded.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Abstract.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION (Starred) 397- Steps taken to eradicate leprosy - Papers Recorded.

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Education and Public Health Department.

G.O.Ms.No.4330 Public Health. Dated 22-12-1948.

ORDER

RECORDED.

Sd. X
Secretary to Govt.

Superintendent,
MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

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